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The MARBLE HOUSE and Other Poems

ELLEN M. H. GATES

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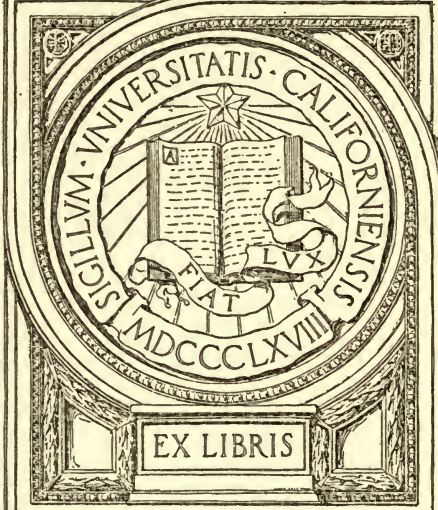

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The Marble House

And Other Poems

By

Ellen M. Huntington Gates

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PREFACE

My mother was the eleventh child of William and Elizabeth Vincent Huntington, and was born in the town, then a village, of Torrington, Connecticut.

As she grew old her mind, as always happens with old people, was much occupied with her childhood and early youth. After she was eighty she began to write down some of her earliest memories:

"*We were very patriotic in those days. At home we heard so much talk of George Washington that he seemed like a demi-god, and we used to weep when we heard of Lafayette's visit to this country. In many of the houses of our town there were old scarlet coats, with gilt buttons, which had been taken from the Hessians.*

"*These made a gallant show on Independence Day. I remember that one was spread over a chair on our front porch and that the whole town was gay with them.*"

She wrote, too, about the first school she went to; when she was four years old:—"*an infant school kept by Miss Sybil Eggleston. Of my*

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education in that school I can only recall that she taught us the names of our five senses.

"We stood in a straight row, with our toes on a crack, and repeated the names of our five senses loudly and earnestly. When we said 'feeling,' we brought our right hands down upon our left hands with great force. The school-room was at the top of a tall building, probably the Town Hall, and if I stood on my tip-toes and leaned far out of the window I saw the tops of the trees where birds builded their nests and sang their happy songs. Under the trees was the insect world, ants and grasshoppers, and slow, crawling worms went back and forth on their various errands, and their world was much larger than they knew, or than we ourselves could even dream."

The little girl of four, standing on tip-toe and leaning "far out of the window" to discover beauty and wonder must already have been what my Mother remained all her life. For it was always mystery that called to her most loudly; the mystery of elemental things: fire, light, and air, the sea and the clouds, the mystery of the puzzling, alien life in birds and beasts and plants. But, far beyond these, dominating, indeed, all her poetic thought, was the mystery of death.

In her deeper self, in her moments of inspiration, she seemed always to be pausing and lingering at the entrance of that Marble House,

listening wistfully for some whisper from within it, straining her eyes to see through its shadows.

She was of a generation which read poets to-day neglected, but which derived its literary culture from older and nobler sources; from the Old Testament, John Milton, Bunyan, Addison, and Pope.

The spirit of New England, its reticence in personal emotion, its flaming conscience, breathed through all she wrote. In her daily life she was fun-loving, full of originality, whimsical often, but, in her work, she belonged to her race and her age, and so seemed, at times, to be like some delicate shell reverberating with the mighty rhythm of thoughts remote from her individual thought.

When she was in her tenth year, and after she had moved, with her mother, to Oneonta, New York, to be near her brothers, Solon and Collis Huntington, who were established there, she wrote her first verses, an acrostic on "Affection." She used, laughing heartily, to quote the first lines:

> "*Affection is of peerless worth*
> *Fain would I worship at its hearth.*"

But I think she was prouder of her early attempts as an artist when, as a pupil "at Miss Lavinia Herrick's school" she was taught to embroider, to draw, and to paint in water-colors.

"*We painted slowly and carefully, and our wonderful pictures of cultivated and field flowers were the pride and delight of our homes.*"

When she grew to be a young woman she was sent to what was known as the "Female Seminary" at Hamilton, New York, and used to tell how she left one morning before it was light—"I wonder that I was allowed to do so!"—and by stage-coach, as there were no railways then in that section, and how she delightedly recognized in a fellow-traveler, her old friend, Loomis Campbell (how quaintly these names echo now!) who was on her way to Madison University, also at Hamilton.

The University and the Seminary furnished the Society of Hamilton—"*Our leisure hours were filled with parties and social gatherings in the hospitable homes of the village,*" she wrote. "*The President of Madison University at that time was Dr. George W. Eaton, and at his beautiful home, 'Woodland Heights,' all the young people were frequently entertained.*" It was an idyllic time in her life—these years at Hamilton. She had one particularly dear and haunting memory of the trailing rose branches that Mrs. Eaton drew in over the low window-sills to adorn her drawing-room.

Among the students at the University were the two brothers Oliver and Edwin Gates; the latter, seven or eight years later became her husband.

While she was still at school her first poem "Your Mission," was printed in the New York *Examiner* and the *Cooperstown Journal.* It was widely copied, set to music, and sung at many concerts.

Abraham Lincoln heard it sung by Philip Phillips at the Congressional Hall in Washington and wrote on a slip of paper (long carefully preserved) "Ask Mr. Phillips to repeat 'Your Mission.' Do not say that I asked for it." This, in spite of the ambiguousness of the last half of the message, was fame, indeed, for a school-girl.

The poem was translated, it was said, into seven languages, but its author used to protest, with charming humility, "*that* seems hardly possible!"

The first ten or twelve years of her married life were spent in Wisconsin, and there she watched the State troops departing for the Civil War.

But the great tragedy of all that tragic epoch must have been, for her, the murder of Lincoln, for it was on that her mind dwelt, most, in her memories, and that which inspired the one poem she wrote of the War: "Lincoln Has Fallen."

In the '70's she returned to the East and from then until her death her home was either in the vicinity of New York or in New York itself.

Her married life was long and of unceasing affection, she had many devoted friends and,

especially in her old age, took among most of her kinsfolk a place of almost consecrated leadership; but, in spite of all those human ties, her inner mind, I think, was most concerned with its visions.

Much of the talk that went on in her presence seemed, after a while, to become irksome to her; one saw her sitting, by preference, a little apart from the others, with her eyes closed and a look of serene detachment on her beautifully cut face.

It was at such moments, perhaps, that her fancies about Light and Dark, about Time and Space and Eternity came to her.

Her short-sightedness, I think, added to the sense of strangeness which she found in many of the things in nature. As she saw them only cloudily she became more concerned with their inner meanings than with their outer aspects.

Adventure, quests among mountain-peaks, wide seas, and unimagined lands called to her until the last.

When she was eighty-four she said in a letter:

"*I am perfectly well and strong; I could go anywhere, I could go to the Himalayas.*"

And with this same eager courage she faced death.

Though, at the end, it came to her swiftly and in all unconsciousness and peace, she had written only a short time before it:

"My slender shadow is already lengthening toward the West. I am neither surprised, nor grieved, for I know that, beyond that crimson light, is the country which I desire to see."

HELEN GRANVILLE-BARKER.

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THE MARBLE HOUSE

THE LIGHT

Stand up, stand up, behold the light!
I come, the long belated one.
The curtains of the dark are rent,
Uprises sea and continent,
And plain across astonished skies
On endless roads my chariot flies.
On worlds that widen evermore
God's own eternal light shall pour.

My sister Darkness sat alone,
Unmoved, unconscious, still as stone,
With naught to take and naught to lose;
In awful cold, the slime and ooze
Sucked softly and no foolish fears
Disturbed the peace of hemispheres.

And there were sapphires bright and blue,
And shapeless diamonds without hue,
And there was never song nor word,
The under earth was still unstirred
'Til suddenly my rays were flung
Across a world new-made and young.
I touched the depths that hold the gold,
In deepest mines I backward rolled.

The awful black that filled the space
Wherein my living fires should race.

First came the rocks and one by one
They formed the earth's great skeleton.
The undivided sea and land
Lay motionless, no human hand
Had flung a seed in furrows deep,
There were no springs to downward leap,
No winds across the earth to sweep.
In darkest depths were slabs of jade
And whitest marble, slowly laid
And kept for monuments to be
When God should separate the sea
From the dry land, when Time should be.

How old am I? God only knows;
Far up among unmelted snows
My beams came down like ponderous blows.
The shrieking ice before me fled
And named my name to quick and dead.
I said to scented spice and wood,
"Come forth and end earth's solitude."
Not yet from heavenly height had come
The loud clear word that rang as far
As God's unnumbered æons are.

The senseless worm that slowly crawls
'Neath roots of trees and crumbling walls
And gnaws, the roots of roses fair
Must welcome give; my rays are there

As on the bones of mastodons.
Impartial, glorious, I can tell
Where walk the feet of Rafael.
On earth or sea or depth or height
There's nothing half so swift as light.

My rays fell down on Sinai old
When all the mountain was ablaze
And God's great glory on it shone,
When Moses talked with God alone.

Where dark monsoons and mistrals cry
As summoned by a trumpet call
Into the pockets of the sky
I fling myself, I make no cry.
I feel no sense of wrong or right,
All passionless and pale the light
That has no soul but simply came
When far beyond all suns aflame
The unseen forces named my name.
Wherever human races are
I wrap around them fold on fold;
They feel no weight of band or bar,
They laugh and weep, they sing and cheer
In God's unnoticed atmosphere.

I, I am but a thought of God,
A shining mite when time was young,
A swift and radiant energy.
My sparks across His world I flung.
No mortal man may measure me

Nor weigh me in his shaking scales.
Should any say, "How long, O sun,
Before thy wondrous race is done?"
I cannot tell, I may go far
As God's most high archangels are.

They watch me well, for well they know
That unextinguished I shall glow,
For long as God's own love shall be
Must heaven and earth have need of me.

I am the light that fills the space
Unoccupied, I know the seas
Where clouds like frightened creatures race.
Shall I be one when Time is done,
When at the last great legions come?
Shall I be joined with larger light
And with all earthly honors come
When God's own chariot swings in sight?

THE DARK

I am the Dark, the ageless one;
Before the days and years begun,
I hovered, formless, silent, cold,
And filled the void. No page unrolled
Makes mention of my timeless reign;
No rock on mountain-top or plain,
By scar or symbol now can tell
The secrets that I know so well.

I am the Dark, the first to be;
My own beginning baffles me.
I seemed a thing apart, forgot,
Which was—because the Light was not.
I dwelt with Chaos: place I kept
As atom unto atom crept,
Till Order stood, with sinews set,
And law with law like brothers met.

I am the Dark, for still I stay,
With half my kingdom wrenched away.
There came an hour when all the black,
A filmy screen, was folded back.
Above me, through me, everywhere,
Were scarlet streaks and golden glare;

And mighty winds began to blow
The trailing mist-wreaths to and fro.

I am the Dark. The eye that sees
The midnight moons and Pleiades
Must wait for me. I claim the sky
To show the splendors swinging high
In space so deep, and wide and black
That thought itself comes trembling back.
The Sun may show the sea and sod,
But I—the far-off fields of God!

I am the Dark. My paths I keep;
No hour too soon the light may creep
Above the hills, no moment late
The Sun may reach the western gate.
The shadows are my own; their wings
They spread above all breathing things
Till joy and pain, and more and less,
Are one in sleep's unconsciousness.

I am the Dark. The under-world,
With soundless rivers onward whirled,
Is mine alone; and mine the lakes
O'er which the morning never breaks.
I dwell in caverns, vast, unknown,
Whose walls are wrought from primal stone;
There Silence, Death, and I can wait—
Creation's grim triumvirate!

I am the Dark, and forth and back,
As God's own servant, robed in black,
I go and come. His dead I keep
Within my chambers while they sleep.
Who knows my doom? Perhaps, at last,
I may be ended, outward cast
From all that is, my deepest night
Invaded by resistless light!

DETACHMENT

Be silent! Let them rest;
Why make an endless quest
  For all they said and did?
Why drag into the light
Their moods of black and white,
  These, with their faces hid?

Bind, if you will, in gold,
The tales their fancies told;
  With wonder breathe their names;
But always, from their art,
Leave them in peace, apart,
  As from the ash the flames.

THE CRY OF THE EARTHLY

Take me back, ye elements,
  Take me. Let me be
One with isle and continent,
  Air and fire and sea.

Wide a bridge of light is laid
  Down to earth and back;
Let a path for me be made
  Up its glittering track.

Call to me, ye elements;
  Break the band and bar;
Lure me from the lonesome tents
  Where the breathless are.

Fling my atoms to and fro;
  All their ways control.
Sometime, somewhere, let me know
  Starting-place and goal.

THE BODY TO THE SOUL

Said the body to the soul:
You are Master, you control;
Viewless, coming from afar,
Mystery to yourself you are.

I, of earthly atoms made,
Stand erect, am not afraid;
Must forever, as I run,
Cast a shadow in the sun.

All the worlds are turning round,
We are strangers, outward bound;
Down the roads we do not know
With our orders sealed we go.

You are awful in your might;
Swift and strong, you feel delight
In the movement of the years,
In the splendor of the spheres.

Strange companionship is ours,
Separate lives and mingled powers;
You will conquer time and death—
In my nostrils is my breath.

Can you tell me when we met?
Know you where our bounds are set?
Can you see the certain line
Where we whisper "mine" and "thine"?

I, your comrade made of clay,
Uncomplaining go or stay;
Kiss your sceptre, fear your frown,
Own your right to wear the crown.

I have fled at your command
O'er the burning wastes of sand:
Heard the icebergs grind and groan
In the lonesome Arctic Zone;

Plunged for you beneath the waves;
Faced the wild beasts in their caves;
Fought your causes on the fields
Where the foeman never yields.

I have wasted 'neath the strain
Of your unacknowledged pain;
If dishonor touched your name,
Cheek and forehead flushed with shame.

When you conquered grief or wrong,
I have sung the victor's song;
In your shining, love-lit hours
I have wreathed myself with flowers.

Now more swiftly drop the sands
Through the hour-glass in my hands,
And more oft I hear you say
I am but the hindering clay.

I arraign you, Sovereign Soul;
I, the slave whom you control,
Face you boldly; you have done
Scarce your part beneath the sun.

He who made you made me too;
In my face His breath He blew;
In my veins, with art divine,
Mixed the blood as red as wine.

Since His hands have fashioned me,
I must unforgotten be;
If you cause me needless pain,
He will hear His dust complain.

Restless, wayward as the wind,
You have suffered, you have sinned,
Urged me onward in your pride,
Beauty fleeing, rest denied.

Oft my lips are parched with thirst,
While you give me drink accurst;
Oft I starve for bread to eat,
While you burn the fields of wheat.

Through his throne-room, may the King
Send his soldiers rioting?
While the workmen humbly toil,
Should the priest the temple spoil?

Sovereign Spirit, back I throw
Blame and failure; I shall go
Unaffrighted to my place,
Undishonored by my race.

You are lonesome, homesick, tost;
You have learned what life can cost;
Leaping upward like a flame,
You will vanish whence you came.

Through my fibers I shall feel
New sensations; I shall reel,
Drooping earthward, be a part
Of old Nature's peaceful heart.

Soul of mine, if e'er you pass
Lake of heaven, as smooth as glass;
Bend above it, you may see
Some transfigured type of me!

THE CLAIMANTS

A bee in the heart of a rose
  May flutter its wings,
But nothing it guesses or knows
  Of beautiful things.
Should I ask of the bee, "Are they fair,
The roses that swing in the air?"
It would say, "They are suitable meat
For earth's little toilers to eat."

On outermost leaf of a rose,
  As pausing in flight,
A butterfly rests, and it glows
  Like opals at night.
Should I whisper, "Thou gem of the air,
For whom are the roses so fair?"
It would tell me they fell from the sky,
God's gift to his gay butterfly!

A worm, at the root of a rose,
  Gnaws on in the dark;
It sees not the way that it goes,
  It hears not the lark.
Should I lean from my place in the tower
To question the worm of the flower,
It would answer, "The rose-tree is made
That worms may live under the shade."

THE ARTIST AND HIS ART

Well the artist loves his art,
Hides it deep within his heart;
Patient with his changeful moods,
It pervades his solitudes.

If he be not swift to go
Where the bugles loudest blow,
In his dream or vision vast,
He will build the things that last.

He must lure from wood and stone
Glorious forms to face his own;
Somehow, with a simple pen,
Write the songs that gladden men.

He will capture fleeting shapes;
Show the tree the tempest shakes;
Paint the sacred thought that lies
In the depth of human eyes.

He can make the cities fair,
Lift cathedrals in the air;
Where the arches highest spring,
Send his music thundering.

Yet within the artist's breast
Shall be longing, vague unrest;
Form and color, swift as light,
Will evade him in their flight.

Sometimes, even with his own,
He shall dwell apart, alone;
Dearest friend may fail to guess
Half his joy or loneliness.

Hope may falter, Love may die,
Fame may cease to signify;
But his art will always be
Comrade, Guide, good company.

TO-MORROW

To-morrow, to-morrow, you insolent shadow,
You torture and tease me and strike at my soul;
But I shall go forward and leave you behind me,
A ghost unremembered when I'm at the goal.

A PASSING SOUL

I pray you, pause; awhile forget
  The trifling things of every day;
For here, as moonlight lingers yet,
  A Soul is passing on its way.

Still toils the heart, a faithful thing
  That questioned not nor asked for ease;
But now it tires; at life's deep spring
  The crimson currents fail and freeze.

The eyes that answered ours so long
  Can see us not—we drift away
Like summer clouds, a transient throng
  Of shapes they looked on yesterday.

Thou passing Soul, so close the clasp
  Of vibrant nerve and surging blood;
'Tis hard to go, to reach and grasp,
  In blinding dark, the hand of God.

What countless cords must broken be,
  What strange adjustments must be made,
Before the prisoned soul is free
  From earth's hard rule and long parade!

New thought invades the darkening brain,
The lips are stiffening with a smile;
No more the doubt or fear or pain
Of time's tempestuous little-while.

Ah, look! the face is changing so,
It seems a stranger's, even now;
A carven face, as cold as snow:
Before its majesty we bow!

A NAME

What if some night as you walked alone,
Where waves crept up to a moonlit shore,
There fell at your feet a strange, white stone,
And the name of a friend was writ thereon—
The name, and nothing more?

And what if the friend were worlds away,
The name unspoken and half forgot—
The friend you loved in a distant day,
Whose hand, at home, in your fingers lay
When morn of the midnight whispered not?

And what if the stone, unearthly bright,
Were quivering as with prisoned flame;
And your heart leapt up with a new delight,
And walls of paradise rose in sight,
As you kissed the dear old name?

SALVAGE

Now from the wreckage I arise
And free my eyes from brine,
And search the shore that near me lies
For stores that still are mine.
The seas that sucked the vessels down,
With all their shining freight,
I still defy. They shall not drown
My soul's untouched estate!

A LITTLE BIRD

I know a little bird that sings
  Its anthem from a slender tower,
Then from a cedar bough it swings
  And seems as fragile as a flower.

I long to hold it in my hand
  And tell it of my passing days;
I wish to make it understand
  How much I love its little ways.

But ah! the bird is wondrous wise;
  It sits superior in its place
Till something calls it, and it flies
  And flings its shadow in my face.

Up! up it goes! an atom fine
  That knows the secrets of the Blue,
And meets with no restraining line
  Among the clouds it passes through.

What thing is this that God has made
  And set between the earth and sky,
So blithe and small, yet unafraid
  Among His thunderbolts to fly?

POVERTY

You shall have love—your share of it;
And honor, too, may be your own;
And gold perhaps, and care of it;
Yet shall you whisper, when alone:
Whatever heart may envy me,
I am as poor as I can be.

THE POTTER AND THE CLAY

Thou, Thou art the Potter, and we are the Clay,
And morning and evening, and day after day
Thou turnest Thy wheel, and our substance is wrought
Into form of Thy will, into shape of Thy thought.

Thou, Thou art the Potter, the wheel turns around,
Thine eyes do not leave it. Our atoms are ground
Fine, fine in Thy mills. O the pain and the cost!
Thou knowest their number; no one shall be lost.

Should Clay to the Potter make answer and say,
"Now what dost Thou fashion?" Thy hand would not stay.
Untiring, resistless, without any sound,
True, true to its Master, the wheel would go round.

How plastic are we as we lie in Thy hands;
Who, who like the Potter the Clay understands?
Thy ways are a wonder, but oft, as a spark,
Some hint of Thy meaning shines out in the dark.

What portion is this for the sensitive clay!
To be beaten and molded from day unto day,
To answer not, question not, just to be still,
And know Thou art shaping us unto Thy will.

This, this may we plead with Thee, workman divine:
Press deep in our substance some symbol of Thine,
Thy name or Thy image, and let it be shown
That Thou wilt acknowledge the work as Thine own.

PRESCIENCE

Some there are—we know their names—
  On whom Nature sets her seals,
Moves them in her mighty games,
  Somehow to their sense reveals
Secrets that no searcher finds;
  In their hands she lays a thread
That forever winds and winds,
  Underground and overhead.

These are they who feel the whir
  Of the eagles' awful wings,
Ere beyond the cliff they stir
  With resistless winnowings.
Lone they are, the prescient ones;
  'Mid to-day's persistent roar
They behold the couriers run
  From to-morrow's opening door.

When the waiting kingdoms call
  They can hear the kings reply;
Plain they see the serpent crawl
  Back to Eden's gate to die.
While they wait with lifted hands,
  While they watch with wondering eyes,
You, that halfway understand,
  Pray for souls so strangely wise!

DEATH

White and inscrutable, soundless, alone;
Over the beautiful building thy throne,
Stately, victorious, making thy claim;
Over the glorious writing thy name.

Calm, unassailable, fixed in thy seat;
Swords, unavailable, break at thy feet;
Kings in their palaces pale at thy sign;
Deep in their chalices freezes the wine.

Words can not reach to thee, backward they
come;
Love stands beseeching thee, still thou art dumb;
Youth in its loveliness, babes of an hour,
Age with its loneliness, all are thy dower.

Thou, when thou findest one worn to the heart,
Then thou art kindest one, taking his part;
Men their Gethsemanes leave at thy call;
Thou, from their enemies, savest them all.

THE CUP OF YOUTH

What if some day upon your door
A hand should knock as to implore

Your swift attention, and you rose
With smiling lips, as one who knows

A friend has come; when lo! a face
You ne'er had seen in any place

Should look at you, a hand lift up
Before your eyes a crystal cup

Which held the draught by poets sung,
The water that should make you young;

Make answer, you who moan and weep,
And babble in your troubled sleep,

Would you not whisper, No! No! No!
And ask your wondrous guest to go?

COURTESY

I think we should arise and go.
A thousand guests, and more,
Are pressing at the outer gates,
Or knocking at the door.

They need the little space we take—
How gay and strong they seem!
Though we are drowsing more and more,
Their eyes are stars a-gleam.

We'll say good-bye and leave them now—
We thank our gracious hosts;
But larger homes begin to call
From all the upper coasts.

PAIN

I know not why I came,
  Nor why I stay so long;
No creature loves my name,
  None praise me in their song.

On all my lonesome way,
  Men look at me and frown;
And, be it night or day,
  They drop their curtains down.

There's no one on the earth
  Who bids me come and stay;
They think I check the mirth,
  And spoil the pleasant play.

Yet in my hand is writ
  A sign I do not know;
I pause to ponder it,
  Whichever way I go.

It glimmers like a star,
  It whispers like a rune;
My Own—whoe'er you are,
  Dismiss me not too soon!

SINCERITY

Come out into the open
  And say the thing you mean;
Let honest words be spoken
  Our sacred souls between;
The truth again may win you,
  Your fingers take the prize;
The spark of God within you
  Leap outward from your eyes.

A GREAT MAN

King of himself, he seeks not earth's renown,
But patient wends to meet his daily tasks;
Bows not his head for laurel-wreath or crown;
An honest wage is all he craves or asks.

Yet is he greater than himself has dreamed,
And men who pass him check their hurried pace;
So clear a light from his clear eyes has gleamed,
It dims the glare on street and market-place.

JOY

My name is Joy! Come out and hear me sing,
  Unfurl your flags to-day,
And question not, nor ask for anything
  That makes an hour's delay.

For ah! Beloved, by chariot swift as mine
  No human feet may run;
I fling you flowers and gems of rare design,
  And tidings from the sun!

OUT OF THE DUSK

Suddenly, out of the dusk
And odor of myrrh and musk,
Looked Yesterday, old and wise,
With love in its faded eyes.

Then all my heart's red blood
Leapt in tumultuous flood.
And I cried to the phantom: "Go,
Lie down in your shroud of snow.

"You are one with the worn-out moon,
But I, in the blaze of noon,
In the noise and the dust of strife
Must deal with the things of life.

"And my days, they go all ways,
Past the doors of blame and praise,
And whatever I keep or lack,
I never may turn me back.

"You were only a link in a chain,
A blade of the grass of the plain,
The ash where the incense burned,
A page that I wrote and turned.

"Dear shadow, abide in peace
And wait for the years to cease,
And patiently watch and see
What the Lord will do with me."

Then Yesterday, old and wise,
With love in its faded eyes,
Waved long farewell, and passed
Into the silence vast.

MY ROSE

My Rose! My Rose! I loved you so;
With tireless eyes I watched you grow;
From fields afar your roots were brought,
Your life was all my own, I thought.

I proudly saw your leaves unfold,
No King might buy you with his gold;
So sweet you were, so wondrous fair
No Queen should bind you in her hair.

When Northern winds were loud and chill,
And frosts were whitening vale and hill,
I said, "Not any blast that blows
Shall play too roughly with my Rose."

If suns above you fiercely beat,
I screened you from their glare and heat,
And prayed that only gentlest dew
And softest rain might water you.

On shining slope, in shaded grot,
Were countless blooms. I saw them not,
Nor missed I them in any wise,
Though dead they lay before my eyes.

One day, just when the Sun was low,
The patient Gardener, walking slow,
Paused by my Rose-tree for a while,
Then looked at me with curious smile.

I scarcely dared to lift my eyes,
I knew he was both kind and wise,
And all too plain my heart could guess
His gaze had pierced my selfishness.

He spoke no word of praise or blame;
Just smiled on me and named my name,
And raised his hand as if to bless;
Then left me there in loneliness.

Next morn, in distant garden close,
Deep-rooted, radiant, grew my Rose;
I looked at it through palings tall—
My Rose that missed me not at all!

How fair it was! I grew content,
So plain the thing the Gardener meant;
In days or centuries yet to be
The rose would be returned to me!

And now I notice, when I pass,
The golden sheen on grain and grass,
And kin to me in all their needs
Are common flowers and wayside weeds.

THE LAST DAYS

Ah, Dearest, these are the last, last days,
  Their moments swiftly run;
The hills are lost in purple haze,
  We scarce can see the sun;
With drooping wings, through endless space,
  Our old illusions flee,
And silence comes, with sacred face,
  And stares at you and me.

Ah, Love, my Love, in last, last days,
  How sweet the roses seem;
While yet a little light delays,
  Back comes the morning dream.
In tents of peace, with perfect trust
  That youth may never know,
Though half our idols lie in dust,
  How fond the heart can grow!

HOW WILT THOU GO?

When all thy days are done, and Life's great
door,
Which let thee in, shall open wide once more
To let thee out; thou wanderer to and fro,
With what equipment wilt thou rise and go?
Wilt say farewell to earth with whimpering cries,
And clinging hands, and backward-turning eyes?
Or wilt thou pass as pleased as any child
That fears no evil though the night is wild,
But singing goes across the darkened halls,
With swift obedience when his father calls?

THE LAST OPINION

Death did a wondrous thing for him,
As cold, and clothed in white,
And blind, and mute, and motionless,
It held him plain in sight.

For then we saw no fault in him;
We blamed ourselves and said:
"*We were mistaken.*" One by one
We rose, and praised the dead!

THE CHILDREN'S COUNTRY

She is sitting very silent in her little crimson chair,
With the flicker of the firelight on her shining golden hair,
And all pleasant things surround her, but her thoughts are otherwhere.

For the little lads and lasses have a country of their own,
Where, without the older people, they can wander off alone,
Into dim and distant regions, that were never named or known.

They are wearied with the questions and the running to and fro,
For some one is always saying "You must come" or "You must go,"
"You must read and write correctly, walking, talking, thus and so."

They can turn at any moment from the figures on their slates,
And the names of all the islands and the oceans and the states
Disappear and are forgotten, when they see the shining gates

Of their own delightful country, where they
wander as they please,
On the great enchanted mountains, and among
the fadeless trees,
With a thousand other children, all entirely at
their ease.

O the happy, happy children! do they wish for
anything?
Book or boat or bird or picture, silken dress or
golden ring?
Lo! a little page will hasten and the treasure
straight will bring.

Is it strange the other people can not find this
land at all.
If they ever knew its language, it is lost beyond
recall,
And they only, in their dreamings, hear its music
rise and fall.

O the riches of the children, with this country for
their own,
All the splendor of its castles, every flower and
shining stone,
Until time itself is ended, and the worlds are
overthrown!

THE OLD DAGUERREOTYPE

O friend beloved! one glance of yours
  Through all the changeful years endures;
Entangled in the sun's bright rays,
  A subtle, shadowy thing, it stays
For me to look upon and keep,
  While you are in the grave, asleep.

Dear pleasant eyes, ye do not mark
  The dawnings, nor the evenings dark;
The mountain-tops are white with snow;
  By country roads the wild-flowers grow;
On new-made graves the sunbeams fall;
  Ye look straight on beyond them all.

Sweet silent lips, once red as wine,
  What smiles and words of love were thine!
Ye filled the air with laugh and song;
  Ye paled and trembled at the wrong;
Whence came to you this grand control
  O'er all the passions of the soul?

My precious friend, from year to year,
  A shade among the shadows here

You dwell apart, nor grieve, nor blame
That now I seldom name your name,
For time makes haste—the hour is late;
We both remember and we wait.

MY SHADOW

Up and down it follows, follows,
I can never quite escape;
On the hills and in the hollows,
This familiar, silent shape
Still is with me, tireless ever;
Friend or foe—whoe'er I meet,
This companion leaves me never
Keeping step with soundless feet.

Looking at it, I am lonely,
For a stranger still it seems;
Though it follows me—me only,
Yet, as something seen in dreams,
I behold it. Oft I wonder
Whither all its steps do tend;
All its features hidden under
Veils no changeful winds can rend.

Can no pain nor passion move thee,
O my comrade? I am tossed
By the tempests sent to prove me—
On thy calm their wrath is lost.

Come thou near, my patient lover,
  Let me whisper that I see—
What no other may discover—
  Change at last has come to me!

Once thy feet were swift beside me,
  Not a hill too high to climb;
From the heat thou didst not hide thee,
  Naught to thee were space and time;
Light as air, I saw thee dancing
  Down the pathway where I strayed.
Dost thou see the night advancing?
  Art thou of the dark afraid?

Canst thou hear me, lover, stranger?
  Silent shape, I tell thee now,
I, through safety and through danger,
  Am become as changed as thou.
Yet my heart leaps on before me,
  New stars burn within the sky;
Courage, courage! I implore thee—
  O my comrade, faster fly!

"WHATEVER TEARS MINE EYES MAY WEEP"

Whatever tears mine eyes may weep,
  One precious thing I still may keep,
Till earth and time shall end;
  I think it will be mine in Heaven,
This perfect gift that God has given—
  It is your love, my friend.

A STATUE

You who love to look on statues,
And the rarest would not miss,
Speak in whispers and step softly
When you come to look at this.
Was there ever whiter marble?
Not a hint of color there,
Save—or is it light from Heaven?—
Golden glints upon the hair.

They who look upon this statue
Must come quickly. Ere the dawn
Of another day shall brighten
Heavy curtains will be drawn
O'er the niche that must receive it:
There, in silence consecrate,
Where no mortal eye can see it,
It will resurrection wait.

Do you say, as you stand weeping,
By its awful power oppressed,
That its place is in the sunlight?
Nay: the statue's name is Rest.
Nothing may disturb its quiet;
Shade on shade will wrap it round;
Peace will guard the heavy portal
Of its temple underground.

"Cruel, cruel!" you make answer;
"All it lacks is blood and breath!"
Hush! two sculptors wrought this statue,
And their names are Life and Death.
Comes a day when earth and Heaven
Shall be shaken; then ah! then,
This white statue shall be lifted,
This dead creature live again!

OTHERS

Others are doing the wonderful things,
  Theirs are the fingers that touch the strings
That sound so long ere the music dies;
  Darlings and pets of their time, they hear
Praises of multitudes, far and near,
  And ever their fame before them flies.

Alas! for the Others! how lonely they stand.
  Far and apart on the hilltops grand,
We see them plainly against the sky.
  God's pity upon them!—there's no retreat
From the world's bold stare and the sun's fierce
    heat
  For the gifted ones who have passed us by.

WE LOVE BUT FEW

O yes, we mean all kind words that we say,
To old friends and to new;
Yet doth this truth grow clearer day by day,
We love but few.

We love! we love! what easy words to say,
And sweet to hear,
When sunrise splendor brightens all the way,
And far and near

Is breath of flowers, and caroling of birds,
And bells that chime,—
Our hearts are light, we do not weigh our words
At morning time.

But when the matin-music all is hushed,
And life's great load
Doth weigh us down, and thick with dust
Doth grow the road,

Then do we say less often that we love,
The words have grown,
With pleading eyes we look to Christ above,
And clasp our own.

Their lives are bound to ours with mighty bands;
No mortal strait,
Nor Death himself, with his prevailing hands,
Can separate.

The world is wide, and many names are dear,
And friendships true,
Yet do these words read plainer year by year:
We love but few.

IDLENESS

All around you, everywhere,
Men and women do and dare,
Swift, alert, aware, alive,
In the swarming human hive.

Up and down, and to and fro,
On an endless round they go;
Patiently they bear their lot,
Life and death they question not.

If the wind blow east, or west,
They can neither play nor rest;
So much work beneath the sun,
Can they die with it undone?

You, an idler, hear no toll
Of lost chances in your soul,
Having neither name nor place,
With the runners in the race.

Are you made of finer clay?
Have you redder blood than they?
Must they always lay the meat
Which they strive for, at your feet?

Must they always, first and last,
Stand between you and the blast?
Are you God's peculiar care?
Has He favorites anywhere?

ROOM

We ask for room where a hope can grow,
A dear old hope that has tried to live;
A place where its starving roots may go,
And secret springs their moisture give.
Room! room for a hope that can not pass,
That drinks the lightest dews that spill
From broken boughs and withered grass,
And clings to life with desperate will.

THE LAST MEETING

If I had known, if I had known,
  That day we met upon the street,
That nevermore, in any zone
  Of earth's wide spaces we should meet;
What different greeting had been mine!
What different farewell had been thine!

If we had known or dimly guessed,
  That close to you were waving wings;
If some low voice within your breast,
  Had whispered of eternal things,
What solemn message, high and deep,
You would have given me to keep!

I now recall—how strange it seems!—
  You spoke of "writing," ah! my friend,
From that far land beyond my dreams
  What wondrous letter would you send!
Here in my silent room I sit,
And hush my breath to think of it.

If I had known! if I had known!
  Still to myself the words I say,

As o'er your grave the snows are blown,
For surely it was yesterday,
When, for a moment's little space,
You stood there, smiling in my face.

I did not know, I could not know:
The angels keep their secrets well,
But as from earth to Heaven they go,
I think some kindly one will tell,
That in remembrance of that hour,
I lift to you this little flower.

THE TREASURES OF KURIUM

Come, look at the treasures of Kurium spread
In the light of the sun. From the dust of the dead
They are lifted at last, and they blaze as of old,
These vials and vases and trinkets of gold.

They are parts of the stories of temple and tomb,
And they bided their time in the silence and gloom;
While flesh that was mortal would molder away,
They flashed in defiance of time and decay.

These rubies are priceless, and red as the blood
Of women who wore them when life was at flood;
O maidens of Cyprus, and daughters of Kings;
What secrets are these that are traced in the rings?

What soft, slender throat did this necklace adorn?
Was it love's trembling gift in the world's early morn?
Speak low in this place, for they do not forget;
Some love that could die not may cling to it yet.

Thou "King Etevander," with story untold;
Didst offer Astarte these armlets of gold?
O'er-wearied with splendor, a boon didst thou crave?
Was it peace on the earth? Was it rest in the grave?

What strange fire was lit in these vases of glass?
It burns unconsuming as centuries pass;
What rainbows were melted and poured in the mold?
What flash of Auroras? What sunsets of gold?

These tear-bottles here which are dry as the dust,
Were once overflowing, their owners, we trust
Behold them with wonder, and smile as they say,
Were they ours? Did we weep when so brief was our stay?

Rich wreckage is this, which has come on the crest
Of billows that roll from the east to the west;
With hints of old sorrow, and splendor, and pride,
It is linking the souls which the ages divide.

"THROUGH A GLASS, DARKLY"

How many times, within the glass,
I see a figure pause, and pass;
As like myself as it can be,
And yet it scarcely looks at me.

The painted portraits on the wall,
That do not move or speak at all,
Look on me with as kind a glance,
As this impassive countenance.

But one day, one, before the glass
I paused, and did not dare to pass;
For there, by some foreknowledge lit,
A face looked out. I looked at it.

The sad eyes pierced me through and through,
From the set lips a challenge flew;
As it had passed through searching flame,
A voice, imperious, called my name.

Before some clear, inshining light,
My earthly atoms fled from sight;
As that which evermore would be,
My soul itself confronted me.

I looked at it, ashamed, dismayed;
It wore a crown, I was afraid;
As one who might, it made demands
Of blood and brain, of heart and hands.

It questioned me, it whispered clear,
Great secrets that I ought to hear;
It bade me keep, in solemn trust,
Its royal purple from the dust.

The tryst was ended. I could see
A veil drop down 'twixt it and me;
I had no questions more to ask
Of Life or Death. I knew my task.

THE PRAYERS

If we listen, we can hear
  Through all sounds that earth is making,
Through its music, sweet and clear,
  Through its moan when hearts are breaking,
    A low murmur, as of streams,
    Flowing through a land of dreams.

'Tis the ceaseless sound of prayer,
  Men and women, sobbing, pleading,
With more pain than they can bear,
  For God's pity interceding.
    All together, each alone,
    Beat the prayers against the throne.

HAUNTED

It comes once more! I turn and flee,
And wave it backward, all in vain;
It knows my pathways,—woe is me!
On, on, across the fields I strain,
And through the forests, where the trees
Lock all their branches; but I hear
A whisper on the wandering breeze,
And know the haunting shape is near.

Within the city's crowded street,
I strive to hide me from my foe;
Where many hearts so gaily beat,
I surely may with courage go.
I should be glad, the sun is high;
I would not harm the slightest thing,
And God himself is in the sky,
And all His angels on the wing.

I do not know, sometimes I think
A friend may come in strange disguise,
With some clear draught for me to drink,
As life's most wonderful surprise;
That in some near or distant day,
The thing I fear may take my hand
And draw me close, and smile, and say,
"At last, at last, you understand!"

ON CHRISTMAS DAY

What can I give you on this day,
  My dear, dear friend of many years?
Your love, as steadfast as the sun,
Along my lengthening life has run,
Nor failed me once, nor made delay,
  Nor laughed to scorn my hopes and fears.

When I am weakest, still your hand
  Is stretched to touch me in my place.
Whatever comes, I smile serene,
To think my soul on yours can lean,
For you are sure to understand,
  And peace and strength are in your face.

O lightly, lightly, to and fro,
  The gifts on Christmas day are passed.
Our hands are weary as they hold
The tiresome trinkets bought with gold;
A while they please us with their glow,
  But back to dust they fall at last.

Alas! my friend, how poor I am!
  No gift I bring you on this day.

No filmy web from Indian loom,
Nor gem, nor flower, nor rare perfume,
Nor spices fine, nor costly balm,
  Before your feet my hands may lay.

And yet I love you, love you, dear,
  And love a deathless thing must be.
Mine shall enfold you, when your face
Makes happier still some heavenly place,
And no revolving earthly year
  Brings tears or pain to you and me.

"I AM OLD," SAID THE EARTH

"I am old," said the earth, "I am old,
I am wearied in all my frame;
I am stiff with the northern cold;
I am seared by the southern flame;
I am worn with the ways of men;
Death reaps them down, like corn,
They are hid in my breast, and then,
Straightway, new men are born.
And their laughter is all in vain,
For they count the days and years;
And they babble of loss and gain,
And they drench me with their tears.
Is there never an end of all?
Can a great world never die,
And rest, like a mighty ball,
In the depth of the awful sky;
Or, some day, feel, through sea and sod,
New, quickening touch, from the hand of God?"

SLEEP SWEET

Sleep sweet within this quiet room
  O thou! whoe'er thou art;
And let no mournful yesterday,
  Disturb thy peaceful heart.
Nor let tomorrow scare thy rest,
  With dreams of coming ill;
Thy Maker is thy changeless Friend,
  His love surrounds thee still.
Forget thyself and all the world;
  Put out each feverish light;
The stars are watching overhead;
  Sleep sweet,—good night! good night!

THE BUTTERFLIES

Look at the butterflies! purposeless things,
How idly they float on their gossamer wings,
Over the poppies and over the grass,
Swift as the down of a thistle they pass.

Where are they going, and why are they here
In the heat of the day and the noon of the year?
They flutter awhile in the brightness, and then
They are gone from our sight, and they come not
again.

And we—we are wearied with fever and frost;
Whatever we do, it must be at a cost;
We hear as we journey, the dropping of tears;
We bear on our foreheads the stamp of the years.

But look at the butterflies! beautiful things,
Before us and over us flashing their wings;
It may be, the Maker who fashioned them thus,
Has sent the gay creatures on errands to us.

Perhaps we go slowly when we should be swift
To follow the scent of the roses, that drift

Their pink snow about us, more oft we might
play
And yet finish our tasks by the end of the day.

O blest are the eyes that are clear to behold
The wonderful glow of the butterflies' gold,
With leisure to follow their flight as they pass
Silently, gracefully, over the grass!

SUNSET

The birds were all a-singing,
  The morning skies were red,
And sweet was our communion,
  And pleasant words we said;
How close we kept together,
  With never once a frown,—
But look, I pray you, brother,
  The sun is going down!

Our path, that at the morning,
  Was as a rosy line,
Through greenest meadows winding,
  Grows shorter all the time;
And now my eyes are brimming,
  To see the shadows fall,
For you and I are walking,
  With no kind words at all.

O Sun, stand still in Heaven!
  Be not so swift to go
Adown your path of glory;
  This friend that loved me so

Must smile once more upon me,
  And I once more on him,
Before the darkness gathers,
  And all the day is dim.

No matter whose the blame was;
  So fast the shadows fall,
There's no time left for talking,
  I'll gladly take it all;
For all the pride and anger,
  Die out within my breast,
Now while the sun is sinking,
  So low adown the west.

FOR WEAL OR WOE

They clasped their hands for weal or woe,
  And went together down the road,
The road that led, they knew not whither,
They did not know what winds would blow,
  Nor where the shining rivers flowed,
Nor when the sweetest flowers would wither.

Their hands were clasped for weal or woe,
  For love's dear sake their hearts were brave,
And years went onward, slowly creeping,
Joy was their friend. With face aglow,
  She often came to them, and gave
Some priceless pearl into their keeping.

Their hands were clasped for weal or woe,
  Together they outwatched the moon
In many a solemn tryst with sorrow.
By wayside graves their tears would flow,
  And crossing many a lonesome dune,
They, each from each, some hope would borrow.

Their hands were clasped for weal or woe,
  And faith was strong, and could not fail,

Though doubts, like evil birds, were flying,
"Our love shall last," they whispered low;
And bent their heads to meet the gale,
Which left its wrecks around them lying.

Their hands were clasped for weal or woe,
More tender grew their words and ways,
Their fingers now were feebly clinging;
They journeyed slowly and more slow,
For strange, new stars began to blaze,
And all the evening bells were ringing.

TWO DREAMS

What awful sounds were in the air,
With tears and torment everywhere!
My feet were on the sinking sands,
They drew me down; I wrung my hands,
And creatures whom I could not see,
With cruel laughter mocked at me;
I could not breathe, I could not die,
And all the time, within the sky,
Were soldiers fighting. Black and red
Their banners waved above my head.
But suddenly a low voice spoke:
"Good-morning, dear." I heard and woke.
And with a glad exultant scream
I cried— "It was a dream! a dream!"

But yesterday I saw a face
Grow white and still within its place,
And over eyes that long had wept,
A blessed darkness slowly crept.
O friend beloved, all pain was passed,
And you were sound asleep at last.
I smiled to think you were so safe
From words and deeds that grieve and chafe;

That Sorrow's self, in garments gray,
Like wavering mist, had fled away;
I thought you heard, as music clear,
New voices say "Good morning, dear."
And waking where the glory streamed,
You joyful cried—"I dreamed! I dreamed!"

BEYOND

Beyond my close environment,
To-day's insistent call,
I forward fare, past cave and tent
And hut and castle-wall.

Shall I—an alien, far from home,
Unnaturalized—forget
The quest I make, and aimless roam,
With bounds too near me set?

With skies above me bending down
To meet the mists that soar,
There's music somewhere that must drown
The world's perpetual roar.

To find my Own, across the gray
Old sea of Time I swim,
And clear my eyes from mist and spray
To watch the orient rim.

For often now I see afloat
Some fair, unearthly thing,
And from above a long-drawn note
Has set me wondering!

AFTER THE STORM

Last night a storm was on the sea;
  The wreckage drifts ashore;
Come walk along the beach with me,
  And hear the breakers roar.

What soul their sorrow understands?
  What eye can trace their path?
They fling themselves upon the sands,
  And foam with fear or wrath.

The shore receives them, patient, dumb,
  Nor trembles at their shocks;
But lifts to meet them, as they come,
  Its great, insensate rocks.

I look across the troubled sea,
  And seem an atom, tost
To wandering winds, and what to me
  Is joy, if kept or lost?

And what if wearied on the way,
  I faint and fall and die;
Would any miss, till judgment-day,
  So small a thing as I?

THE YELLOW ROSE

Within a book, unopened long,
I find a faded yellow rose,
It lies across a poet's song,
That tells of love and cruel wrong,
And on the margin of the page,
Are two initials, dim with age.
The song I read, the book I close,
And fling away the yellow rose.
No matter! Always, East and West,
Will yellow roses still be pressed.

LONELINESS

Up! Up and onward! Cast thy loads
  Behind thee, as thou speedest on;
To shining summits, stretch the roads
  Which many rain storms beat upon.
If boulders from the awful height
  Come crashing down, look not at them;
A hand unseen will guide their flight,—
  They may not touch thy garment's hem.

Since thou didst leave the vales below,
  Where smooth, green paths for thee were made;
Since thou didst say thy feet should go
  Up the great mountains, unafraid,
Make now thy words of boasting good,
  Unto the void thy terrors toss;
Vex not thy chosen solitude
  With words of loneliness and loss.

A LITTLE LOVE

Give them just a little love,
These poor creatures with no traces
Of the lovely in their faces.
Though they take your gift with scorning,
Though they grieve you night and morning;
In the name of God above,
Give them just a little love.

Give them just a little love,
Touch their hands in friendly fashion,
Speak to them in kind compassion,
Tell them of the Heavenly City,
With its everlasting pity,
In the name of God above;
Give them just a little love.

Give them just a little love,
These poor creatures. On their faces
Sin and shame have left their traces.
Do not judge them. Kindly leave them
To the Christ who may receive them.
In the name of God above,
Give them just a little love.

THIS ONLY

Dear little, weary, wasted hand,
  That from the valley lonely
Waved long farewell, and left to us,
  This golden circlet only!

UNSATISFIED

Be still for a moment, thou weariful world!
Thy wheels they go faster and faster;
I have bowed to thy will, I have followed thy beck,
I have worn, uncomplaining, thy yoke on my neck,
But I will not acknowledge thee master.

Thy beautiful trinkets I hold in my hands;
I cannot but smile at thy story;
The lily-bells ring and the birds fly in flocks,
The vines and the mosses creep over the rocks,
The clouds are as banners of glory.

Like blossoms the butterflies flit here and there,
And birds in the branches are singing;
The children are mocking at sorrow and care,
There's music and laughter afloat in the air,
And flowers in the meadows are springing.

A wonderful pageant! I see it go by;
And beauty and ashes are blended;
Keeping step with the others, I march to and fro,
But I feel all the time like a child at a show,
That he knows, in an hour, will be ended.

DEAR HOPE OF MINE

Dear Hope of mine, struck down in strength,
  As you were upward flying;
Lie still! lie still! for you, at length,
  Healed, helped, all foes defying,
Shall cleave again the star-lit track,
No wind that blows may beat you back;
  You are not dead, or dying!

A NEW GUEST

What, Sorrow! have you come at last?
And are you now my guest to be?
So many times my door you passed,
As one who had forgotten me.

Well, well, come in! Beside my hearth
Sit down, as many a friend has done,
When all my house was filled with mirth,
And hearts were glad from sun to sun.

For you I spread no banquet fine,
Nor call my neighbors in to see
Your pale, sad face, strange guest of mine
Yet I a courteous host will be.

I will not strive with you at all,
I will not frown and bid you go;
If Joy has gone beyond recall,
You are her sister dear, I know.

You did not chance to walk my way;
With orders signed and sealed you came
You followed where my pathway lay
And knew my number and my name.

"LEST YE BE JUDGED"

They thought, with tottering human feet,
Themselves could climb to the judgment-seat;
  And their steps were upward bent.
But a strange light flashed from a flying cloud,
And a voice dropped down, and the heavens
      were bowed,
  And they knew what judgment meant!

JOY

List! her feet are at your door;
  Her sandals shine with evening dew;
How late she is! but now, once more,
  She turns her radiant eyes on you.
For long delay she makes amend;
  Rare scarlet blooms around you fall,
And glad new songs to Heaven ascend,
  For earth is glorious, after all!

A LIE

She told a lie, a little lie.
It was so small and white,
She said, "It cannot help but die
Before another night."
And then she laughed to see it go,
And thought it was as white as snow.

But oh, the lie! it larger grew,
Nor paused by night or day,
And many watched it as it flew,
And, if it made delay,
Like something that was near to death,
They blew it onward with their breath.

And on its track the mildew fell,
And tears of grief and shame,
And many a spotless lily-bell
Was shriveled as with flame.
The wings that were so small and white,
Were large, and strong, and black as night.

One day a woman stood aghast,
And trembled in her place,

For something, flying far and fast,
Had smote her in the face;
Something that cried in thunder tone,
"I come! I come! Take back your own!"

A PRAYER FOR HELP

Canst thou not hear us, thou Almighty God?
Are all our prayers like bubbles upward blown?
The earth is shaking. Man, and sea, and sod,
And all thy winds together, making moan.

O Sacrifice! O Tragedy sublime!
The fathers old are marching with their sons;
They fling themselves by thousands at a time
Against the maws of the devouring guns!

And where art thou? The peoples rage like
beasts;
With faith forsworn and passion at its flood,
They Thee forget, and at their bitter feasts
They lift to Thee strange flagons warm with
blood.

And overhead, within the fenceless sky,
Which was our own, and made for our delight,
Are shapes like birds that slaughter as they fly,
And sing of hate, with all the stars in sight.

Behold the Kings! O, God, behold the Kings!
Their eyes are sad. The crowns are heavy weight,

The throne rooms fill with mournful echoings,
And armies camp too near the palace gate.

We whisper low—*Are these the days, the days,*
The long, last days of all the years of Time?
Hide us, O God! Our cities are ablaze,
Our rivers sicken with their crimson slime!

If Thou hast missed our voices from the choirs,
How can we praise Thee while the bullets sing,
And smoke-wreaths curl above our dear desires,
And faith flies slowly on a wounded wing?

Maker of worlds, and hope of every race,
Through warring camps by suffering souls
implored,
Send Thou to us from his exalted place,
Thy Angel Michael, with his flaming sword!

A SOUL

Since this is a human soul, beware
And touch it not with a careless hand;
Its life is long, give light and air,
And let it live as its laws demand.

I pray you look; it is rare and fine,
An alien flower with an inward glow
It shrinks away from your dark red wine,
And slakes its thirst with the dew and snow.

It is sad and glad; it is young and old;
It loves the cyclone and the sun;
It is like a harp with power untold
That all the winds may play upon.

AT LAST

At last, at last, the precious friend
  She would have died to save,
Grew strangely kind, we saw him bend
  Above her peaceful grave
With ferns and flowers. She did not wake
His tardy gifts to see or take.

A VOICE

Your voice, your voice; the voice I loved so well!
Best friend of mine, have you come back once more
Through utter void, from Heaven's own height to tell
What oft you told me with your tongue and pen?

On senseless disk that whirls before my eyes,
Are lines too swift, too infinitely small
For me to trace, yet deep within them lies
Your echoing tones that cannot die at all.

My glorious One, from what remotest bound,
Beyond this room, and Time's lamenting toll,
Have you returned? What country have you found
That grants brief passport to your faithful soul?

A TREE

I stood beside an ancient tree,
  And stroked its bark with tender hand;
Good friends were we; it counseled me,
  Its waving leaves my forehead fanned.
I long had watched the years that rolled,
  But there, beneath an ageless sky,
And under branches centuries old
  I cried, *Dear God, how young am I!*

TO THE UNBORN PEOPLES

Ye Peoples of the future years,
  We you salute. To you we fling
From these revolving hemispheres
  A greeting glad. While yet we cling
To earth's old rim, we think of you;
  A watch we keep by day and night,
As plain, in Heaven's unfathomed Blue,
  Your great battalions sweep in sight.

Hail! Hail! to you, ye glorious hosts,
  Ye formless shapes that haunt us now;
Ye gathering tribes, unresting ghosts,
  Behold us here, as low we bow
In salutation to our Kind;
  Our kindred dear, whose blood will be
As red as ours, whose hands will find
  To rooms we found not, door and key.

Ye waiting Ones that bide your time,
  Ye too shall know of joy and pain;
The storms will smite the hills you climb;
  The suns will scorch you on the plain;

The seas will lure you; you will go
  In paths our ships may never find;
On isles unknown and peaks of snow
  Your tribes will camp, your horns will wind.

Ye unborn Peoples, we have tried
  To march in ranks where none retreat;
In rifts of rocks our records hide,
  And you may find them, when your feet
Shall stand in places where our hands
  Were torn and soiled by thorn and grime.
To you we leave the Seas and Lands,
  And all the glorious spoils of Time.

Advancing Races, Sons of men,
  How can ye bear life's awful stress?
What will ye do with sword and pen,
  And good and bad, and more and less?
When all our Prophets go their ways,
  And all our Anthems are forgot,
What Altars will your builders raise
  To Him who lives and changes not?

Ye Legions vast, from depth and height,
  We beg from Science chart and proofs,
That you may stand in clearest light,
  And sign to Saturn from your roofs.
The Earth is prescient now with sense
  Of growing power, judicial doom,
Good will to men, Omnipotence
  That whispers low, "Make room! Make room!"

Ye Peoples of the future years,
  Keep faith with us, the elder Ones,
Wipe out the causes of our fears,
  Climb nearer to the central Suns.
We go our way, our names will die,
  Ye shall not find them near or far,
Our highest spans in dust will lie
  As low as Karnac's pillars are.

Hail! Hail! ye Peoples yet unborn,
  We leave you all that Love bequeaths;
Our gems and mines and field of corn,
  Traditions, arts, and Valor's wreaths.
New voices call. We disappear.
  Above our dust your songs will swell;
Your banners float,—Our Kinsmen dear,
  Hail! Hail! and then,—Farewell, Farewell.

THE PEACEMAKERS

I thought I saw, upon the shining coast,
A mighty host.
Their eyes were luminous with joy and peace,
That would not cease.
Somehow they seemed more royal and more blest
Than all the rest.
Yet ever did they wonder that their names
Met loud acclaims;
And that such honor unto them was given,
In highest Heaven.
They had not borne the banners, in the strife
Of mortal life.
Their foreheads had not felt the touch of wreaths,
Which fame bequeaths
To conquering heroes, as they homeward march,
Through Victory's arch.
These were the souls that when the strife was high,
Made soft reply.
The men and women, who could patient stand,
And make demand
For peace, peace only, though their pride was crost,
Their dear hopes lost.

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Oft had they caught, with soft and naked hands,
The flaming brands
Which anger hurled, and quenched before it fell
Some fire of Hell.
They did not dream how great their souls had grown;
No sculptured stone
Was piled above their ashes when they slept;
But God had kept
Their faces in His sight; He knew the cost,
When passion-tost
And sorely hurt, they patient came and went,
On peace intent.
Now they are "blessèd" evermore, and lo!
Where'er they go,
The angels look on them, and smile and say,
"God's children, they!"

O HELEN, HELEN DEAR!

How lightly up the winding stair
We ran together, she and I;
And still I see her lovely face
Look downward from the landing-place;
For she outsped me. Through the gloom
Of the great hall, into her room,
She led me on that summer day,
In years that fled too quickly by.

I pray you, if you ever pass
This sunken grave, within the grass,
Touch tenderly the crumbling stone,
And say, for me, in undertone—
"O Helen, Helen dear!"

How fair she was, how straight and tall,
My Helen in that far-off day!
Like living things that longed to go,
The curtains fluttered to and fro,
As up and down the room we walked,
Perhaps of love and lovers talked,
As girls have always done, and will,
And nothing whispered "yea" or "nay."

I pray you, if you ever pass
This sunken grave, within the grass,
Touch tenderly the crumbling stone,
And say, for me, in undertone—
"O Helen, Helen dear!"

What trifling things the heart will keep!
They seem too simple to be told.
That day she lifted from its place
A dainty thing of flowers and lace,
And held it up that I might see.
O little bonnet, plain to me,
Your ribbon streams across the mist,
A shadowy streak of palest gold!

I pray you, if you ever pass
This sunken grave, within the grass,
Touch tenderly the crumbling stone,
And say, for me, in undertone—
"O Helen, Helen dear!"

A SONG OF VICTORY

Ring! Ring by millions all ye Bells!
Ring as ye never rang before!
Around the world the music swells,
All nations hear the glad uproar.
From peak to peak the word is flung,
It leaps like flame across the seas,
And never yet its name was sung,
In days as wonderful as these.

Ring! Ring ye Bells in cities old!
Ring all ye Bells in every town!
Ring loud in markets manifold.
And over prison walls that frown
Send ye the story of to-day,
The day that saw the silent guns
And saw the war-clouds pass away,
That all too long had hid the Suns.

Ring! all ye Bells! Ring louder yet;
Tell all the tribes that Peace has come,
With happy tears our eyes are wet,
Tell this! ye Bells of Christendom.

And far away, o'er summer seas,
Swing swift ye Bells of gay Japan,
We all are one, in days like these,
We sing the brotherhood of Man.

Lift high your head, Jerusalem!
The hated war-clouds drift away,
Jehovah's breath has blown on them,
Praise Him in Synagogues today.
All peoples 'neath the Crescent born,
Forget your wounds, be glad again,
With flags and flowers your homes adorn,
Respect the general joy of Men.

Old China raise your reverend head,
Let all your templed music swell,
At last the grandest word is said,
In flames around the rim of Hell
Green islands anchored and at ease,
Beneath your palm trees tell the tale,
Strange peoples in the zones that freeze,
Fling tidings to the roaring gale.

Ring! Ring ye Bells, ring near and far!
The skies are bright with rainbow bands,
And Earth forgets her sword and scar,
And foe with foe is clasping hands.
Ye Bells of Time, ring clear and slow!
White shadows dance across the sod,
And listening angels flying low,
With Alleluias rise to God.

OUT OF THE DEPTHS

"God! God! O God!" Across the dark,
And through the void, rings out the cry,
And souls before Him, standing stark,
Are listening for a clear reply;
Some signal flashed from distant spheres,
To tell them that He sees and hears.

"God! God! O God!" Forevermore
His name rolls upward; where is He?
Along what unimagined shore,
Across what undiscovered sea,
Must we fare forth? What wondrous road
Will lead us to the King's abode?

"God! God! O God!" We grow more bold;
More love we crave as years increase;
More shelters from the heat and cold;
More of Thy pity and Thy peace.
Hold fast Thine own! from Thee we came,
As deathless sparks from central flame.

ETERNITY

O the clanging bells of Time!
  Night and day they never cease;
We are wearied with their chime,
  For they do not bring us peace.
And we hush our breath to hear,
  And we strain our eyes to see,
If thy shores are drawing near;
  Eternity! Eternity!

O the clanging bells of Time!
  How their changes rise and fall;
But in undertone sublime;
  Sounding clearly through them all
Is a voice that must be heard,
  As our moments onward flee,
And it speaketh aye one word:
  Eternity! Eternity!

O the clanging bells of Time!
  To their voices, loud and low,
In a long, unresting line,
  We are marching to and fro;

And we yearn for sight or sound,
  Of the life that is to be,
For thy breath doth wrap us round;
  Eternity! Eternity!

O the clanging bells of Time!
  Soon their notes will all be dumb,
And in joy and peace sublime
  We shall feel the silence come.
And our souls their thirst will slake,
  And our eyes the King will see,
When thy glorious morn shall break,
  Eternity! Eternity!

TWO HOUSES

I have built it strong and high,
I have made it fair and fine;
All the people passing by
Stop to praise this house of mine.
I have brought from far and near
Rarest things to fill it full;
I shall dwell for many a year
In my house so beautiful.

Then the Soul said: "But my house
Is so low and poor and small,
Through its windows dark with dust
I can scarcely see at all.
I must build a palace grand,
That eternally will stand."

Ah! my house! its splendor wanes
All its lights are burning low;
Time has touched it with its stains,
One by one its treasures go.
See! it trembles to its fall,
Here is neither peace nor rest;
In my mansion fair and tall
I am but a transient guest.

Then the Soul said: "But my house
  Stands unshaken, white as snow;
All its pillars rest in rock,
  All its windows are aglow.
Earth may vanish, time may cease,
I shall dwell in perfect peace."

PERSONALITY

Thou, helpless babe, whose days went by,
  As dim as dreams, as soon forgot,
Wert thou myself? nay, nay, for I
  Could see thy face, and know thee not.

Dear child with hair like shining flax,
  Who sat'st beside my Mother's knee,
Time's shifting sand has hid thy tracks;
  What had my life to do with thee?

And yon tall girl that looks afar,
  And questions earth and air and sea,
And follows fast her guiding star,—
  Dear God, how far she is from me!

In noon's strong light a woman stands,
  With life's full pressure on her laid;
Its curious webs are in her hands,
  And flushed with joy, yet half afraid,

She turns her wondering eyes on me;
  And claims me yet; I felt her needs;—
Up roll the mists from land and sea;
  I onward press, her form recedes!

Am I responsible for these?
  Far off, in some great judgment-hall,
Beyond these earthly, storm-swept seas,
  Must I make answer for them all?

COME, SWEETHEART, COME

Come, sweetheart, come! across the road
  Are the great rocks that all must pass;
You may not lay aside your load,
  And though you cry, "Alas, alas!"
No hand may help you in this hour;
  We stand aside, you make your moan,
But this is your allotted dower,
  This pain must be your very own.

The rocks are there, so cold and gray;
  Your feet are tender, they will bleed;
O sweetheart, must you go this way?
  Our hearts cry out, "What need? What need?"
But come! make haste! your name is called;
  It seems in love and not in wrath;
Smile now on us, and unappalled,
  Go slowly up the narrowing path!

Now, sweetheart, turn your peaceful eyes,
  The cold, gray rocks you crossed alone,
Are gleaming fair beneath the skies,
  By vines and mosses overgrown.

Repeat the tale so often told;
Just in the darkest, loneliest place,
Your path became as burnished gold,
And angels met you face to face.

"TRACE THOU THE PATH"

Trace thou the path which the eagle took,
  The first-formed, glorious one;
Which, from its birthplace on the rock,
  Went soaring toward the sun.

And seek and see if ye cannot find
  On the ancient eastern shore,
One priceless gem from the glitt'ring crown,
  Which the Queen of Sheba wore,

And a chord from the harp that David smote;
  And a shred of Tyrian stain;
And a leaf from the palms whose boughs were
      wet,
  By the first bright drops of rain.

The earth and the air closed over them;
  They are fled with the human hosts;
They returned again to the formless void;
  They are less than the dreams of ghosts.

IN DARKENED HOUSE

In darkened house of common clay,
  The brain, imperial, dwells alone;
None say to it or yea or nay,
  Or ask its right to crown and throne.
The dull, gray substance sleeps and wakes,
  And wonders why and whence it came;
With sense of self it throbs and aches;
  A heaving force, a prisoned flame.
By law unwrit or sacred sign
  It holds its power—a right divine.

Behold the king!—how lone his state!
  But countless couriers round him stand;
They do his bidding while they wait;
  Or outward haste at his command.
Viewless and soundless, up the height,
  While radiant suns beneath them glow;
With wings made swift by sheer delight,
  Where mightiest angels only go;
They speed their flight—what worlds unfold!
  They find what kings, in dreams, behold!

What power is here? What master grand?
  In darkness bound, of lowly birth;

Yet made to think, and feel, and stand,
  As God's own Viceroy on the Earth.
The beasts before him cringe and creep;
  The ancient mountains bow them low;
As still as death, through oceans deep,
  The swift, obedient lightnings go.
Thou brain of man awake, asleep,
  Still art thou King! Thy Kingdom keep.

A NEW PRAYER

Men and women, long defeated,
  Pray a new prayer on your knees;
Ask no more for love or riches,
  Ask no more for fame or ease.
Lift your empty hands to Heaven,
  Pray for wisdom, that alone,
Though He watches worlds in motion,
  He will hear your faintest tone.
Angels will descend to help you,
  Stone by stone shall yet be set,
Slow, persistent, without clamor,
Without sound of workman's hammer,
  You shall build your temple yet!

AFTER DEATH

At first when my face shall be changed, and I go
To dwell in a silence that cannot be broken,
A few whom I love will lament me, I know,
And eyes will be dim when my name shall be spoken.

If any have blamed me, their censure will cease,
For when the full light of eternity flashes,
There's nothing to do but to whisper of peace,
And no one can war with a handful of ashes.

But O to be gone from the home that was mine;
With no more a share in its joys or its sorrow;
My part in its plans to forever resign,
No thought of to-day and no care for to-morrow.

All this is beyond me. How strange it will be
To go on a journey that has no returning,
With year after year speeding on without me
To gladden or grieve when the sunsets are burning!

The children will lean their light weight on the stone,
To spell out my name and to question and wonder
What 'tis to lie there in the darkness alone,
Through moonlight, and starlight, and rolling of thunder.

But then, in a moment, some butterfly gay,
Will hover above them and chide their delaying;
With beautiful wings it will lure them away,
And they will forget what the stone has been saying.

But I shall lie patiently there in my place,
The slumber a part of my life and my story;
Till some time the morning will flash in my face,
And I shall awake to its gladness and glory.

A DRIVE AT NICE

The sea below the olive trees,
Was glittering in the sun
And almond blossoms to the breeze
Were wafted, one by one.
No cloud in all the blue above
Its shade above us cast;
The palm trees, as with human love,
Waved blessings as we passed.

Above the stately villa walls,
We saw the roses climb;
And sounds of distant waterfalls
Made music all the time.
And often, as we laughed and talked,
And loved a world so wide,
Our pleasant driver slowly walked,
And stroked his horse's side.

Well pleased to hear us praise the scene,
He bade us turn our glance
On ancient Alps, that stood serene,
To guard the land of France.
Sometimes we passed a soldier gay;
Again, a beggar whined,

And oft, in niches by the way,
Christ's Mother sat enshrined!

Beside our wheels the children ran,
They ran for miles and miles;
Small strangers in our transient plan,
They gave us welcoming smiles,
With Parma violets lifted high
To halt our swift advance—
What could we do but buy and buy
The fragrant flowers of France?

We passed the gay mimosa trees,
Could earth itself be old,
When yellow blooms as sweet as these,
Cried out—behold! behold!
We pilgrims, wandering from the west,
Who searched for joy and peace;
Was this the ending of our quest,
This road that led from Nice?

We passed the forts of primal rock,
High lifted, stern, and gray,
Unheard by them Time's awful clock
Ticked centuries away.
Familiar with the shouting seas,
Their silence mocked their roar;
In league with God's own mysteries,
They served Him evermore.

A GLEAM OF CRIMSON

(Her dress on that day was of a most noble color, a subdued and goodly crimson, girdled and adorned in such sort as best suited with her tender age.—Dante's *Vita Nuova*.)

Where old Florence sits majestic,
With her treasures round her spread,
Whispering to herself, and asking
Endless honor for her dead;
There, within the halls of silence
Kept for memories and for dreams,
Lo! a hue of softest crimson
Through the shadow always gleams.

Ah! that festa by the Arno!
Neighbors gathering, young and gay,
Singing, dancing, speaking praises
Of their lovely Tuscan May;
And, among them Beatrice,
Gentle, serious, in her place;
Guessing not her future story,
Nor the sweetness of her face.

Unremembered are her features;
All the eyes with joy aglow

On that fateful eve in Florence,
Darkened, centuries ago;
But forever, clothed in crimson,
Must a little phantom dance,
And a color, rare and fadeless,
Glow in Dante's sad romance.

THE BARS OF FATE

I stood before the bars of Fate
And bowed my head disconsolate;
So high they seemed, so fierce their frown,
I thought no hand could break them down.

Beyond them I could hear the songs
Of valiant men who marched in throngs;
And joyful women, fair and free,
Looked back and waved their hands to me.

I did not cry "Too late! Too late!"
Nor strive to rise, or rail at Fate,
Nor pray to God. My coward heart,
Contented, played its foolish part.

So still I sat, the tireless bee
Sped o'er my head with scorn for me,
And birds who built their nests in air
Beheld me, as I were not there.

From twig to twig, before my face
The spiders wove their curious lace,
As they a curtain fine would see
Between the hindering bars and me.

Then sudden change! I heard the call
Of wind and wave and waterfall;
From heaven above and earth below
Came clear command—"Arise and go!"

I upward sprang in all my strength,
And stretched my eager hands at length
To break the bars—no bars were there;
My fingers fell through empty air!

LITTLE PEOPLE

Forgive me, my brothers and sisters,
  Little people who live in the grass,
So heedless was I of your presence,
  But now I am crying "Alas!"
Lamenting my deafness and blindness,
  And wishing I better had known
My neighbors, the peaceable creatures
  Whose homes were so near to my own.

I wish I had lingered in passing,
  And lifted the leaves of the field,
And watched you run hither and thither
  In paths which the grasses concealed.
I wish that my fingers had touched you
  And made you look up at a friend,
Though you were so tiny and transient,
  And I—of the world without end!

I wish you had told me your story,
  And I could have told you my own;
How sweet would have been our communion
  In hours that were weary and lone.

I shall go, I shall flee like a shadow,
I shall answer the voices that call,
And you with your homes in the grasses,
Will never have loved me at all.

LOVE AND HATE

Said Love to Hate, "I shall destroy you yet;
  Around my throne your servitors shall stand
To gaze on me, till they your name forget,
  And you, yourself, shall bid my foes disband."

LOVERS

The white rose and the red rose,
  Either side the garden gate,
Though in love with one another,
  Were so sadly separate,
But when summer-time was ended,
  They no longer were alone,
For their faded leaves together
  To the sodden turf were blown.

THE EAGLE'S BROOD

Some day when the Eagle leaves her nest
To search the shore for food,
We'll climb to the mountain's rocky crest
To gaze at the callow brood.

But we may not stay, and we must beware
When the Eagle homeward flies,
For we are weak, and we could not bear
The wrath in the Eagle's eyes.

FAREWELL

(To T. O. C.)

Now, at the last, he lies here, cold and breathless;
No place for care within this peaceful breast.
Joyful and swift, and at his King's commanding,
His soul goes forward on its endless quest.

Patient and kind, he served his generation;
Lost not his road in earth's bewildering maze.
We bend our heads in silent salutation
And brief farewell, and go our separate ways.

February 2, 1914.

THE GREAT WHEEL

My life is filled with little wheels,
  And if I sleep or wake
They still revolve; so small they are,
  No sound at all they make.

At times the dust will clog them so,
  They falter in the grooves.
I cannot tell the thing to do—
  There's scarce a wheel that moves.

But always, far behind them all,
  And as to glorious song,
One mighty wheel serenely turns,
  I've known it all life long.

It cannot swerve, exact and smooth,
  It spins my thread of fate;
I may not touch it with my hands,
  I can but work and wait.

APART

You were my friend; I watch you go,
  Slow climbing up the height;
I wander through the vale below,
  But still I keep in sight
Your shining raiment; as a star
You gleam among the hills afar.

In days that into mist withdrew,
  You walked and talked with me;
I all your happy visions knew,
  All that you meant to be
In that "to-morrow," which unrolled,
Before your eyes its blue and gold.

Somehow, somewhere, I know not when,
  I missed you from my side;
You never will come back again,
  I think if you had died,
The grave itself, though dark and drear,
Would not have been so distant, dear.

IN THE FOG

Am I left alone? Has the whole world gone
But the one small spot that I stand upon?
Was there nothing real? Were the hills a dream?
Did never the dew of the morning gleam?

I grope in the fog like a blinded man
Who has missed his way. I have lost the plan
Of the world I knew. O where, I pray,
Are the fields I walked in yesterday?

Out there at morn, on a bough, low-hung,
An oriole's nest, in the breezes swung;
I turn my eyes to the self-same spot,
But the bough and the bird and the nest are not.

Were the damask rose and ivy green
But phantoms cast on a phantom screen?
Were the tinted shells on the sunlit shore
What rainbows are when the storms are o'er?

And the friends I loved—have I lost them all?
In the fog's assault did their castles fall?
I send their names with a lonesome cry
Through a cold gray wall, but there's no reply.

GIFTS

I used to send you gifts, my dear,
And your gifts came to me.
On Christmas Day what light and cheer
Within our homes would be.

But now, if I should speak your name,
No answer would come back,
Although your memory, like a flame,
Lights all my earthly track.

You fled so fast, you fled so far,
Your path I fail to trace;
But oft I wonder where you are,
In old, star-lighted space.

O take my love, immortal friend,
My Christmas gift to thee,
And out of glory, somehow, send
Your own dear love to me.

Christmas, 1912.

ILLUSIONS

Dear things, I watch you flying
  Far off across the sea;
You are not dead or dying,
  You simply died to me.
But still in life's December,
  My heart leaps up and sings,
For I with joy remember
  The coloring of your wings.

PERSONAL DESIRES

For Light and Air and Space I ask
  And roads that upward climb;
And heart and hand to do my task,
  And Silence half the time.

Space, Light, and Air, and Sun, and Star,
  And Moons that reach their prime,
And eyes to see where Angels are
  In these low lands of Time.

Light, Space, and Air, and children gay,
  Who love To-morrow's face,
And laugh at Sorrow's garments gray,
  And tire not in the race.

Space, Light, and Air, and Hope that saves
  And webs to music spun,
And crosses set by lonesome graves,
  When Earth's sad wars are done.

Light, Air, and Space, and Spices rare,
  And dim uncharted Isles
With sounding shells and blossoms fair,
  Where harbors stretch for miles.

Peace, Light, and Air, these three, I ask,
And not these transient things,
That vex my soul, and halt my task,
And break my wearied wings.

Light, Space, and Air, and hill and glen,
And end of ooze and grime,
And music making love to men,
And Sagas, old as Time.

Space, Light, and Air, and Solitude,
To sit as still as stone,
And whisper low—My God is good,
Though worlds are overthrown.

Space, Light, and Air, and fearless eyes,
That watch the gathering throng,
While Saints sing loud of Paradise,
And praise Him all day long.

Space, Light, and Air, and story-books,
And legends told in rhyme,
And flocks and herds and running brooks,
And Heaven in God's good time.

Then faltering feet, and long release
From all that tires me so,
And widening skies and psalms of Peace,
As forth from earth I go.

My last Desires—dear home and friends,
  And one great love to last,
To be my own, when dreaming ends,
  And Earth's strange tale is past.

STRENGTH

Our strength is greater than we dare to think
We turn our heads and whisper no! no! no!
From this dark cup, we may not, will not drink,
No man was born to taste such wine of woe,
Then draws the cup more near our tightening lips,
Prest close to them by hard, resistless hand,
Then wondrous change and hard to understand,
New vigor steals through our astonished frame,
Old wounds are healed, more glad and young we grow,
The desert waste is blossoming with the rose,
Up longer roads with singing lips we go.

THE SEA

Thou wandering waste of water,
  Thou thing of many moods,
Thou hast no dusty highways,
  No crowded neighborhoods.
Is land illusion only?
  Our very senses swim.
There's water, water, water,
  To far horizon rim.

Transcendent beauty claims thee,
  For all thy noise and wrath,
We love thy lonesome grandeur,
  We love the foaming path
That closes up behind us,
  And leaves no single trace,
No source of sob or laughter,
  No hint of form or face.

The clouds that gather o'er thee,
  Salute thee as they pass,
Thou art from everlasting
  Their glorious looking-glass.

The rainbows in their splendor,
  The meteors as they flee,
And wheeling constellations,
  Behold themselves in thee.

Old sea, we whisper softly
  The names of friends we lost;
Can'st keep them sleeping soundly
  In chambers tempest-tost?
Be kind to them, we pray thee,
  Above their graves forlorn
Chant psalms of sounding trumpets
  At resurrection morn!

REMEMBERED MIRTH

You, you, my friend, who were so kind and gay,
Who, if we wept, could laugh our tears away,
Do you still smile? Enwrapt by heaven's content,
Does aught remain of earth's old merriment?
Forgive me, Dear, though many years have sped,
I laugh to-day, remembering things you said.

RENUNCIATION

No word of love I say to her,
No step do I delay for her,
  But ever as I go,
I cry, dear Lord, take care of her,
Her heavy burden bear for her,
  And some day let her know,
That all my being cried for her,
Though now I seem to hide from her,
  Her face I always miss.
Whatever life may bring to her,
My heart will always cling to her,
  In mercy tell her this!

MYSELF

Myself must cross the bridge that sways
  With half its timbers gone,
Ere I can call to him who stays,
  "Make haste! Come on! Come on!"

MAN AND THE SUN

He creeps from out a darkened place
To gaze at God's great Sun;
Its glory sweeps across his face,
And all that he has done,

Or failed to do, and numbered days,
And living things, and dead,
Are naught to him, so clear the blaze
That fills the arch o'erhead.

His life becomes a singing chord,
In light his senses swim;
He thinks creation's silent Lord
Is flashing signs to him.

TO ———

I shall not cry Return! Return!
  Nor weep my years away,
But just as long as sunsets burn,
  And dawns make no delay,
I shall be lonesome, I shall miss
Your hand, your voice, your smile, your kiss.

Not often shall I speak your name,
  For what would strangers care,
That once a sudden tempest came
  And swept my gardens bare,
And then you passed, and in your place
Stood Silence with her lifted face.

Not always shall this parting be,
  For though I travel slow,
I, too, may claim eternity,
  And find the way you go;
And so I do my task and wait
The opening of the outer gate.

THE VOID

We dream of circles vast, enlarging evermore,
And wheels that turn, perpetual as the moon,
And soundless seas, unhindered by a shore,
And one white day, forever at high noon.

But thou, the Void, what thought, flung into thee,
Can tremble downward through the darkness old
To find that point where nothing else can be
But shapeless space, and silence and the cold?

Comes the long Last, when with thy doom fulfilled,
The awful æons, traveling sure and slow,
Take thee for spoil, and glorious light be spilled,
And seeds of worlds within thee float and grow.

WHEN

When we have lived our little lives,
  And learned of life and death;
And known alternate joy and pain,
And seen the sunlight and the rain,
And trod the mountain-top and plain,
  In different zones of earth;

When we have learned what love is like,
  And felt what hate can do,
And watched the rose, so dear and sweet,
Fall dead and faded at our feet,
And heard the clock the hours repeat
  Till all our years are through;

Then wilt Thou lift us, Lord, to Thee,
  And show us from the height,
What Thou didst mean, when Thou didst make
The cooing dove, and poison snake,
And plant the nightshade, and the brake,
  And set them all in sight?

THE WAY

Tell me, O God, is this the way,
  The path my feet must take?
Around my feet Thy lightnings play
  And Earth's foundations shake—
The fragile framework of my life
  Is shaken to and fro,
The winds are cutting like a knife
  Whichever way I go!

Too many tongues are calling me,
  Too loud the singers sing!
What fate is this befalling me?
  Thy bells too loudly ring!
My castles crumble one by one,
  Bright bubbles soar and break,
Strange figures standing in the Sun
  Cry to my soul—Awake!

I hear them and I answer—Yes.
  I try to lift my eyes,
To find in all this wilderness
  One truth that signifies.

Reach me Thy hand, most holy One,
I am too blind to see,
Through midnight or the blazing noon,
My God, remember me!

LOSSES

If all the losses of the years,
  The things which you have missed so long,
And mourned with unavailing tears,
  Came trooping back, with dance and song,
And stood expectant at your door,
  Would you receive them back once more?

THE MARBLE HOUSE

This is a curious house indeed;
No person stands in sight;
And all have everything they need,
If it be day or night.

And no one asks another one
If he be ill or well;
And no one speaks of work begun,
Or has a tale to tell.

And no one sings a pleasant song,
And love no more may plead
Forgiveness for a word of wrong,
Or some too careless deed.

A watcher stands by day and night
And leans against the door;
The sunbeams through the tinted glass
Make rainbows on the floor.

There is one window and one door
In this most peaceful home;
And they who dwell here ask no more
Through wider fields to roam.

A lonesome name is plainly writ
  Across the lintel high;
One word—you scarce would notice it
  If you were passing by.

And rose may bloom and snow may drift,
  But pink or white the lawn,
No lip will move, no eyelid lift,
  No curtain be withdrawn.

EARLIER POEMS

RECOGNITION

O Nature, my Mother, how thoughtless and careless
Was I of thy love in the times that are past;
But awake, and aware of thy wonderful kindness,
I lean my tired head on thy bosom at last.

Thy rivers went singing between their green borders,
But all their low music was nothing to me;
My life was so young, I was taking my orders,
My fancies went swifter than waves to the sea.

The peaks of the mountains were pleading for notice;
The stars were my friends, and they called from the sky;
The winds at my windows were knocking like fingers;—
O where was my heart that it could not reply?

Come haste thou to me, most Merciful Mother,
Bidding me rest in thy beauty and calm;
Taking my part, and, as something akin to me,
Healing my hurts with beneficent balm.

Nature, thou kind one, I love thee and praise
thee;
In sunshine or shadow, in silence or sound
I creep to thy arms. Like an Indian hunter,
I list for thy voice with my ear to the ground.

AT NOONDAY

O friends, dear friends! what mean these sober faces?
The children dance around us, free as air,
But more and more, there comes into our faces
A wearied look, and we are grown aware
Of solemn changes that are stealing o'er us,
For O the years! they make their stern demands.
What can we do?—the way is short before us,
And closer, closer we are clasping hands.

We scarcely knew when the sweet morn departed;
A wondrous light was over earth and sky,
And on we sped, careless and happy-hearted,
Nor answer made to her "Good-bye, good-bye."
We miss her now, the changeful years endear her,
Through golden mists we watch her where she stands;
She looks and smiles, but never will come nearer,
Then closer, closer let us clasp our hands.

We thought the sun was standing still above us,
A changeless thing, safe anchored in the sky;

It moves at last, and now, if any love us,
We call to them "Noon, too, is passing by!"
Along the grasses do our shadows lengthen,
The winds blow fresh from undiscovered lands;
Now, now indeed, all tender ties should strengthen,
And closer, closer we are clasping hands.

The song of birds is sweet and sweeter growing,
The rainbows bend more brightly in the sky;
We slowly walk, but we are surely going
Through wider gateways, as the years go by.
O little children! dance and sing around us,
Not one of you our story understands;
We have borne crosses, many crowns have crowned us;
And closer, closer we are clasping hands.

Our ranks are broken, but we follow, follow,
Along the paths that every foot must tread;
The Heavens are near when earth is ringing hollow;
Why should we mourn or be disquieted?
O friends, dear friends, come nearer still and nearer!
Love wears her crown and strengthens all her bands;
Your faces glow, your names are growing dearer,
And closer, closer let us clasp our hands!

SEPTEMBER THIRTIETH

It is true, my heart is heavy, for the summer days
are flying,
The frost has touched the roses and they wither
on the stem;
Pinks, pansies, and forget-me-nots, they all are
dead or dying,
I hear the cruel north-wind go sweeping over
them.

And my precious morning-glories, in their purple
splendor growing,
Looking through their leafy lattice, all the world
was fresh and fair
And I loved to stand beside them when the east-
ern sky was glowing,
For they cheered me like an anthem, and they
calmed me like a prayer.

But to-day I look upon them and behold their
glory waning,
The cold rains beat upon them, they are shaken
to and fro;

They seem to me like human souls in awful strait
complaining,
As low they cry "Good-bye, good-bye, into the
dust we go."

Good-bye, good-bye, I answer them, my summer
too is fleeting.
I miss the glow and glamour that the spring-
time only knows,
Across my pathway I can see the autumn shadows
creeping,
And though a thousand years to come may bud
and blossom the rose,

And all the flowers may come and go, a gay
procession bringing
The freshness of the younger years, the grasses
wet with dew,
The pink blooms on the apple trees with birds
among them singing,
And fleecy clouds, like angel wings, soft floating
through the blue;

Yet I may be so far away beyond the earth's dim
border;
So thick a veil may hang between these mortal
days and me,
How do I know if I shall mark the seasons in
their order,
Or gladden when the winds blow warm across
the land and sea?

And though within the wondrous world to which
my soul is going,
Are lips forever smiling sweet and hearts forever
young,
And in the gracious atmosphere fair blossoms
always blowing,
And "Glory, glory, glory" is the song forever
sung;

Yet I cannot help but sorrow when the summer
days are going,
I seek the sunny places, and I love them more
and more,
And dear and dearer still to me these simple
things are growing—
The vines that shade the windows and the flowers
beside the door.

A STORM AT NIGHT

The gas-lights flicker in the rain,
  The wind comes roaring down the street,
And wrestling with the storm amain,
  The door-yard trees, like souls in pain,
Our human sympathies entreat.

The sky is black with warring clouds
  And all his thunders mutter low,
While here and there, like fiery brands
  From the Almighty's open hands,
The leaping lightnings go.

'Mid such an awful storm at night,
  While all creation groans around,
All earth and time sink out of sight!
  As thought on thought, in solemn flight,
Goes yearning up the dim profound.

How hushed are all our passions now!
  Ambition's fever dies away,
Strength takes the helmet from her brow,
  And sitting in the ashes low,
Pride blushes over yesterday.

The soul looks through the vague expanse,
  And stirs her chain, and tries her wings,
And often with a fleeting glance,
  Beholds her high inheritance,
Among the everlasting things.

Rave! rave ye winds o'er sea and land!
  Our pulses to your music throb;
Through Nature's temple, vast and grand,
  Peal on! and make us understand,
The awful immanence of God.

LITTLE MISS FANNY

Little Miss Fanny has fallen asleep,
No need to step softly, her slumber is deep;
'Twas just at the dawning, she called to us low,
And whispered "Good-bye, I am ready to go,
I lean on the arm of the Mighty, and He
My Guide through the valley of shadows will be."

So she passed on before us; the great world around
Is throbbing and calling, she hears not a sound:
Her work is all ended, the rise and the fall
Of life's tidal waters she heeds not at all.
O, strangest of all things! when over her breast
These pale slender fingers in idleness rest.

How much we shall miss her; a hundred might go
From wide, shining circles of fashion and show,
And the world be no poorer in goodness or trust,
In patience or meekness, but O, when this dust
Unto dust shall be rendered! how many will say,
"A cloud has come over the face of the day."

She was always so earnest, so kind and so true,
So patient with others, so ready to do
The work that lay nearest her, taking her place,
With so willing a heart and so smiling a face,
That oft when the heart of the stoutest would fail,
She would stand in the name of the Lord, and prevail.

How much she has suffered! the griefs she has known
Were whispered in secret to Jesus alone,
And hope's blessed song-birds would soar like the lark,
'Til dear little Fanny could sing in the dark,
For, somehow, there flourished wherever she went,
The beautiful blossoms of joy and content.

We look on her features, 'tis true, they are plain,
They are wrinkled with years, and disfigured by pain,
But we loved her so well, that no painter could trace
With softest of colors, so pleasant a face
For us to look on, as this statue of clay,
This picture of peace that we watch o'er to-day.

In the quiet room yonder, while memories crowd,
Two neighboring women are making a shroud;
'Tis only of muslin—not costly and rare
Is the robe, that in death, little Fanny will wear,
But the women are smiling; they think, as they sew,
Of the wonderful robe that is whiter than snow.

BREAD UPON THE WATERS

Mid the losses and the gains,
Mid the pleasures and the pains,
And the hopings and the fears,
And the restlessness of years;
We repeat this promise o'er,
We believe it more and more:
Bread upon the waters cast
Shall be gathered at the last.

Gold and silver, like the sands,
Will keep slipping through our hands;
Jewels, gleaming like a spark,
Will be hidden in the dark;
Sun and moon and stars will pale;
But these words shall never fail:
Bread upon the waters cast
Shall be gathered at the last.

Soon like dust to you and me,
Will our earthly treasures be;
But the loving word and deed,
To another in his need,

They will unforgotten be,
  They will live eternally:
Bread upon the waters cast
Shall be gathered at the last.

Fast the moments slip away,
  Soon our mortal powers decay,
Low and lower sinks the sun,
  What we do must soon be done;
Then what rapture if we hear,
  Countless voices ringing clear:
Bread upon the waters cast
Shall be gathered at the last.

YOUR MISSION

If you cannot on the ocean
Sail among the swiftest fleet,
Rocking on the highest billows,
Laughing at the storms you meet;
You can stand among the sailors,
Anchored yet within the bay,
You can lend a hand to help them,
As they launch their boats away.

If you are too weak to journey
Up the mountain, steep and high,
You can stand within the valley
While the multitudes go by;
You can chant in happy measure
As they slowly pass along—
Though they may forget the singer,
They will not forget the song.

If you have not gold and silver
Ever ready at command;
If you cannot toward the needy
Reach an ever open hand;

You can visit the afflicted,
O'er the erring you can weep,
With the Saviour's true disciples,
You a tireless watch may keep.

If you cannot in the harvest
Garner up the richest sheaves,
Many a grain, both ripe and golden,
Oft the carelesss reaper leaves;
Go and glean among the briars
Growing rank against the wall,
For it may be that their shadow
Hides the heaviest wheat of all.

If you cannot in the conflict
Prove yourself a soldier true,
If, where fire and smoke are thickest,
There's no work for you to do.
When the battle-field is silent,
You can go with careful tread;
You can bear away the wounded,
You can cover up the dead.

Do not then stand idly waiting
For some greater work to do,
Fortune is a lazy goddess,
She will never come to you;
Go and toil in any vineyard,
Do not fear to do and dare,
If you want a field of labor,
You can find it anywhere.

ANNUALS AND ACORNS

He plants an annual, you plant an acorn,
Both will be beautiful, by and by;
Sealed in their sepulchres, veiled from your vision,
Alike for a little while they lie.
Softly the sunlight will fall where they slumber,
On them will filter the rain and dew;
Standing together, you look where you laid them;
Counting the moons as the Indians do.

A brief waiting only; the brown earth will open,
Up from its grave will the annual rise;
He who is standing so patient beside you,
Will look at his treasure with joy in his eyes.
He'll pluck a gay blossom to wear in his bosom,
Its beauty and fragrance will please him an hour;
The seed that he planted has come to perfection,
Not long did he wait for his fair little flower.

Now what will you do, for your acorn grows slowly,
So slow that its growth must be counted by years;

There's no one to praise it, and more and more lowly,
You grow as you water the plant with your tears;
You know that its roots are in league with the granite,
You know that its branches will seek for the sky;
But O the long strain on your faith and your patience!
Your hair is like silver, the years hurry by.

At last you lie down in your life's western chamber,
All watching is over, your hope has come true;
And smiling you look at the mighty oak branches,
Now waving between the red sunset and you.
O what was the waiting, and what was the weeping!
Now, now that the day of your crowning has come,
For in the near Heaven are many tongues crying,
"Thou planter of acorns, well done and well done!"

THE GRAPES OF ESCHOL

Among the tribes, the weary tribes, we wander;
The way is long, complainings fill the air;
With God so near, we fear the kings of Edom,
By smitten rocks we yield us to despair.
The seas gape wide and make for us a pathway,
We hear the cry of Pharaoh's drowning host,
But mists roll up, there's discord and confusion,
And far away is Canaan's peaceful coast.

Then do we see that walking close beside us,
With steady step, and eyes that onward look,
Are those who went before us to that country,
And brought us grapes from Eschol's wondrous brook;
Their faces shine, their lips are always singing,
The winds of Canaan have their foreheads fanned,
Alike to them are sunrise and sunsetting,
Their feet make haste, they have beheld the land!

O thanks and thanks, a thousand times repeated!
We know your names, ye valiant, faithful few;
Your lowest words are sweet as Heavenly music,
Ye searched the land out better than ye knew.

When through the camp there rings a cry for
"Egypt,"
And all our tribes sway backward in despair,
We turn to you who bear the purple clusters,
For still ye say "Surely the land is fair."

We pray you, friends, walk closer still beside us;
Talk to us often of the way ye took,
When ye beheld the citrons and pomegranate,
And plucked the grapes that grew by Eschol's
brook.
If doubts, like evil birds, fly on before us,
And clouds obscure the path that must be trod,
Speak low to us of Sinai and its thunder,
Repeat the name of Israel's mighty God.

BEAUTIFUL HANDS

Such beautiful, beautiful hands!
Not wondrous white nor small,
And you, I know, would scarcely say
That they were fair at all.
I've looked on hands, whose form and hue
A sculptor's dream might be;
Yet are these aged, wrinkled hands
More beautiful to me.

Such beautiful, beautiful hands!
Though heart were weary and sad,
These patient hands kept toiling on,
That the children might be glad.
And I could weep, as looking back
To childhood's distant day,
I think how these hands rested not,
When mine were at their play.

Such beautiful, beautiful hands!
They're growing feeble now,
For time and pain have left their mark
On hand and heart and brow.

Alas! alas! the nearing time
And the lonesome day for me,
When 'neath the grasses, out of sight,
These hands will folded be.

But far beyond this shadow-land,—
And many a friend is there—
I know full well, these dear old hands
Will palms of victory bear!
Where crystal streams, eternally
Flow over golden sands,
And where the old are young again
I'll clasp my mother's hands!

MY MOTHER'S PICTURE

How many times, as through the room I hasten,
Without a thought of other days at all,
I lift my eyes, and straightway I am standing
Before her picture, hanging on the wall.

Almost it seems her pleasant voice is calling,
And I am fain to answer, "yes, I hear,
All earthly sounds shall be to me as silence,
If you will speak, O mother, mother dear."

No answer comes, I hush my breath to listen,
But still the eyes with patient, steadfast gaze,
Look into mine; they pierce through flesh and spirit.
I bow my head and blush beneath their rays.

For she is wise with wisdom that appalls me,
The solemn secrets of the grave she knows,
And high above, by God's own hand uplifted,
Through wondrous ways of His own Heaven she goes.

Beyond all change, and safe from time's mutation,
And grieved no more by earth's forlorn complaints,

Thou pictured face, dim semblance of my mother,
How dost thou look among the crownèd saints?

So far! so far! Once, if I faintly called you,
Or laughed, or wept, you were so quick to know;
All else might fail, my mother's love was certain,
Now, dying e'en, your touch I must forego.

Thou there, I here, and I know not what spaces
Beyond the grave's green width divide us two;
Nor of the times unnoticed and unnumbered,
That must go o'er me ere I look on you.

But I am coming, I shall find you, mother;
Sometime, somewhere, when His great will is done,
And I am fit to stand once more beside you,
To your high place I shall have leave to come.

MY CHILD

O thou great world! so full of lights and shadows,
Of doubts and fears, of hopes that wax and wane,
Of lonely deserts and of green oases,
Of mirth and music, bitter tears and pain;
I look far off adown thy tangled mazes,
But mists are floating and the clouds are piled,
And I can stand upon no mount of vision,
To trace the pathway of my little child.

I pray thee, World, deal kindly with her ever,
And do not fright her in her tender years!
Hold back thy storms, let them not beat upon her,
Dim not too soon these soulful eyes with tears.
If far away among the dim to-morrows,
Dead leaves are rustling where her feet must tread,
Let all thy breezes prophesy of summer,
And all thy birds sing joyful overhead.

Angels of God, pitch your white tents above her!
And let her feel, whate'er the future brings,
That all the air is throbbing with your presence!
And when the evening, o'er her pathway flings

Shade after shade, still walking close beside her,
Let your "Praise God" ring out so loud and clear,—
A hymn of Heaven among the earthly noises,—
That all her soul shall hush itself to hear.

Thou Sword of Truth, flash night and day before her!
Should falsehood weave its meshes for her feet,
Should poison fruitage hang alluring o'er her,
And lying voices bid her pluck and eat;
Then thou good Sword, flash swift through all disguises,
Point out the place where error lies concealed,
And O, to win the soul's immortal prizes,
Strike thou for her on life's great battle-field!

Thou King of kings, Jesus, Thou son of Mary!
As once of old, Judean mothers came,
Bringing their children, praying Thee to bless them,
So come I now, my errand is the same;
In arms of faith I hold her up before Thee,
The world, O Lord! how wide it is and wild!
What can she do? How can she live without Thee?
With all Thy blessings, bless my little child!

"LINCOLN HAS FALLEN!"

Lincoln has fallen!
Toll it, ye bells, over valleys and mountains;
Wail it, ye winds, as ye sweep on your way;
Moan it in sadness, lakes, rivers, and fountains;
And all ye blue waves, on the beaches at play,
Bear it over the sea—a most terrible burden;
Oh, never before such a tale did ye tell;
The tempest was spent, and at hand was the guerdon,
When out of a clear sky, this thunderbolt fell!

Lincoln has fallen!
With his hand on the wheel, while the wild storm was beating,
How firmly he stood, with his calm, patient face
Lifted up to the sky, as ever entreating
The Lord of the tempest, to lend him His grace.
All around him the leaden hail rattled, and loudly,
And wild, o'er the deck, swept the breath of the gale;
And we looked on our pilot so gladly and proudly,
But see! here he lies to-day, helpless and pale.

Lincoln has fallen!
For the old flag he died: we will wrap it around
him!
He died for the truth; deeply traced on his soul
Was the law of the Lord, and He surely will
crown him
A King, while the years of eternity roll.
O "People that prayed for him," tenderly take
him;
O "state that he loved," let him sleep on your
breast;
Though hearts break within us, we cannot awake
him;
Tread lightly, speak low—let the President
rest!

IS YOUR LAMP BURNING?

Say, is your lamp burning, my brother?
I pray you, look quickly and see;
For if it were burning, then surely,
Some beam would fall bright over me.
There are many and many around you,
Who follow wherever you go;
If you knew that they walked in the shadow,
Your lamp would burn brighter, I know.

Upon the dark mountains they stumble;
They are bruised on the rocks, and they lie
With white, pleading faces, turned upward,
To the stars in the pitiful sky.
There is many a lamp that is lighted,
We behold them anear and afar,
But not many among them, my brother,
Shine steadily on, like a star.

If once all the lamps that are lighted
Should steadily blaze in a line,
Wide over the land and the ocean
A girdle of glory would shine!
The darkest of places would brighten;
The mists would roll up and away,
And Earth would laugh out in her gladness,
To hail the millennial day!

SOMEBODY'S WORKING FOR SOMEBODY

The times are hard, the world is cold,
There's lust for power, there's greed for gold,
And hearts are bought, and hearts are sold—
  But Somebody's working for Somebody.

In lonely places, far and near,
The tangled paths to smooth and clear,
Unthanked, unnoticed, year by year,
  Somebody's working for Somebody.

And eyes may weep, and arms may ache,
And hopes may die, and hearts may break,
But still, for Love's unfailing sake,
  Somebody's working for Somebody.

I pray you say these plain words o'er,
Repeat them oft from door to door,
By night and day, on sea and shore—
  Somebody's working for Somebody.

"THE MISTLETOE BOUGH"

Far back among the misty years,
I heard the sweet old song;
I was a careless, happy child,
Scarce knowing right from wrong;
But O the tender, mournful words,
That through the twilight rang;
And O the lady, fair and tall,
Who sat alone and sang!

She charmed me with her lovely voice;
Her hair was backward blown;
She sat upon a doorstep low,
And it was near our own;
But there were whisperings in the air,
She was not "wise" or "good."
No little child might speak to her
In that fair neighborhood!

How strange it was! I looked at her,
I could not understand;
I felt so far apart from her,
Yet longed to take her hand.

I would have asked about the song:
  Where was the "Castle Hall"?
And what the "Holly Branch," that shone
  Against the "old, oak wall"?

Where is she now, that lady fair,
  In whom no child might trust?
I think her very grave, to-day,
  Is leveled in the dust.
I wish that I had gone to her,
  Not knowing right or wrong,
And laid my hands on hers, and said,
  "I thank you for the song."

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